

The Member said that all the above roads would facilitate trade in the taluk and that at least the first two roads might be improved at once and the rest taken up as early as possible in the near future.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

III. PROTECTION.

(1) LEGISLATION.

28. Reform of the Legislative Council.

Mr. C. P. Kochukunju Pillai (Member, Kottarakara taluk) said that, though it was thirty years since the Legislative Council was first established, it had not undergone any material change either in its constitution or its usefulness, scope of work or election of non-official members, except for the increase in the number of members to fifteen and the election of four non-official members by the members of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly from the four older Revenue Divisions. The jurisdiction of the Council, however, had been narrowed by the restrictions referred to in the proviso to section 12.

The Council was not, therefore, of much use for the political education or training of the people. In the British Indian Councils, the principle of election had been recognised and all the Councils there had been reformed so as to afford facilities for associating the people in the work not only of occasional legislation but also of actual everyday administration. Discussion of the Budget and the asking of questions were also allowed to those Councils, the official majority being done away with in the Provincial Councils. Similar concessions were given to the Mysore Legislative Council and the Representative Assembly of Bikanir, which were started comparatively recently.

Regarding the work of the Travancore Legislative Council, the Member said that it was very much limited. Instances of original legislation attempted by the Council were very few, the two foremost being the Nair Regulation and the Christian Succession Regulation. The Council, therefore, stood in urgent need of reform so as to give it greater scope for work and better representation to satisfy the growing political consciousness of the people. Public opinion also strongly supported the above view. There was a united cry all through the country for the enlargement and reform of the Council.

The Member pointed out that the condition of the people made it imperative that they should be more closely associated in the administration of the country, and that the Education Boards, the Town Improvement Committees, the Legislative Council, the Panchayat Courts and even the Popular Assembly had been instrumental in making the people take more interest in the government of their country. Higher education was also making headway in Travancore and the educational advancement of the people required that they should be better treated and given greater powers, rights and privileges. The increase in the number of newspapers, the greater interest the people took in public matters, the power of organisation shown by them in local public associations and the capacity with which they managed such associations, the training received by public men in the Popular Assembly and the good sense, moderation and the feeling of responsibility of the Members as testified to by the presiding Dewans, and the standard of efficiency of the Members of the Legislative Council, all pointed to the fitness of the people to receive greater powers in the Legislative Council. The Member, therefore, suggested that the Legislative Councils Regulation should be amended so that provision might be made therein for the following reforms:—

(1) The number of Members should be increased to 21. The Heads of the several Departments should be Members and such non-official interests as Commerce and Industry, Municipalities, Jenmies, Kudiyans, etc., should also be represented.

(2) There should be a majority of non-official Members, who should be elected by electorates to be constituted according to rules framed by the Government. A small number might be nominated by the Government to represent minor interests.

(3) The Annual Budget Statement should be discussed at one of the meetings of the Council. That check on the State income and expenditure was certain to be salutary, for it would give the people an opportunity of expressing their views on public expenditure. It would also give the Government a chance to moderate their expenditure in the light of criticism and to explain their policy to the people to avoid possible misunderstandings.

(4) The non-official Members should be allowed the right of interpellating the Government in regard to questions of public importance.

(5) The Members should be given the power of moving Resolutions on important matters.

All that would help the Government to ascertain the trend of public opinion on all public questions. It would also have the effect of discouraging and disarming irresponsible and carping criticisms on the actions of Government.

In conclusion, the Member said that it was a matter for sincere gratification to have as the Head of the Administration one with considerable experience in the Madras Legislative Council and prayed that his representation might receive the serious and sympathetic consideration of the Government and that the boon of a reformed Legislative Council might be given to the people on the occasion of His Highness' Diamond Jubilee.

Mr. P. Parameswaran Pillai (Member, Pathanapuram taluk) said that, on the subject of reforming the Council, he had nothing to add to what the previous speaker had already stated.

He then observed that, according to the Civil Procedure Code, the sale of immovable property in execution of a decree would be confirmed by a Court, if money was not deposited within a specified period and that the provision had been altered in British India and other places. The Member prayed that similar changes might be introduced here in consultation with the High Court.

Mr. R. Narayana Pillai (Member, Ettumanoor taluk) said that he too agreed with *Mr. Kochukunju Pillai* both as regards the necessity for reforming the Council and the lines on which the reform should be carried out. He pointed out that the work done by the Legislative Council in Travancore was being done in Cochin by a small Law Committee. The Council in its present constitution and with its narrow scope was incapable of meeting the needs of a progressive Government. He thought that the Members of the Council should have at least those rights and privileges mentioned by *Mr. Kochukunju Pillai*, which were being enjoyed by their compeers in the British Indian Councils and that the power to discuss the annual Financial Statement of expenditure was required not to harass the Government in any way but only to see that the public money was spent properly.

Mr. K. Hussain Pillai (Member, Nominated) also dealt with the same subject and argued on the same lines pursued by the previous speakers.

He suggested reforms in the Council on the following lines:—

(1) The number of Members should be raised to 25, with a non-official majority.

(2) The power to elect non-official Members should be vested in the people, and such interests as Education, Commerce, Industry and Agriculture should be represented in the Council.

(3) The Budget discussion and the right of interpellation and also the power to move Resolutions on important matters should be given to the Members subject to such restrictions as the Government might deem fit to impose.

(4) There should be at least two Mahomedan Members in the Council.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.